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**Sussex County
Government**

News Release

Sussex County Airport wins federal grants for runway, wetlands mitigation projects

Georgetown, Del., Sept. 13, 2011: Sussex County has landed more than \$1 million in grants from the Federal Aviation Administration in its ongoing efforts to extend the main runway by 500 feet and make other improvements at the County-owned airport near Georgetown.

Airport Manager James A. Hickin updated County Council at its Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011, meeting on two awards from the FAA, including a \$724,000 grant to pay for design work for the planned 500-foot runway extension, and another \$514,000 grant to pay for an unrelated wetland mitigation project related to the airport. County Council formally accepted both grant awards, a necessary step for the dollars to flow from Washington to Sussex County.

"These are important pieces to the funding puzzle for the planned improvements at the Sussex County Airport," Mr. Hickin said. "Without this critical support, these plans might have been delayed or otherwise not possible."

For several years, the County has been working on plans to extend by 1,000 feet the 5,000-foot-long main runway at the airport, a general aviation field that also serves as an economic hub for manufacturing in the county. The \$724,000 grant announced Tuesday would be for the 500-foot extension.

Citing safety and economic development reasons for the project, County officials have said a 1,000-foot runway extension would better accommodate larger aircraft, including Boeing 737s

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more

and Boeing 757s, some of which already land at the airport for conversion work at a manufacturer in the adjoining industrial airpark.

In the past year, the County has ramped up its efforts, working with State leaders and Delaware's congressional delegation to secure funding to make the full extension project a reality. Nearly \$24.5 million is needed for the County's ultimate goal of a 1,000-foot extension, but that remains a long-term endeavor as federal funding for that project is not yet available.

So far, County government has committed to the 500-foot extension, which would cost significantly less, approximately \$9 million, because it would not require the relocation of nearby Park Avenue. The 500-foot extension project would be eligible for 95 percent funding from the FAA. The balance would be shared between the County and State governments.

The FAA's recent decision to award the County the \$724,000 grant for design work is a strong signal that further federal funding will follow for the 500-foot runway project, Mr. Hickin said.

County officials thanked the FAA for its commitment, and praised Sens. Thomas R. Carper and Christopher Coons for their continued support of the airport improvements.

"This is a project that has tremendous opportunity to improve the economy of Sussex County, and I'm thankful for the many people who have come together at each step in the process to help move it along," Council President Michael H. Vincent said. "This funding will help us to keep the airport viable and competitive as a job center now and in the future."

Construction on the 500-foot extension is slated to begin in the fall of 2012, and be completed by late 2013.

The Sussex County Airport, owned and managed by the Sussex County government, is a general aviation field that records nearly 40,000 landings and takeoffs annually, and is popular with a mix of small private and large commercial-type aircraft.

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